

# Appendix E

## Prioritization Matrix

### Description of the WDFW Prioritization Tool

The prioritization tool uses 34 different criteria to rank an action, for the purpose of informing planning discussions and decisions. This tool first attempts to identify actions that are either an Absolute Priority (the expectation is that it be done and justification is required if it will not occur), or Non-Priority (meaning there are sufficient reasons to not take an action and if an action is taken it should be justified). All actions can also be scored using both weighted and standard criteria that if applicable to the action add value to its relative priority. Finally, the status of the species or ecosystem (the Resource Score) may also be added to the equation to allow that value to impact the priority ranking.

### Step by step instructions

The italicized instructions below are found on the “Instructions” tab on the Prioritization Tool and describe how to complete the Priority Scoring spreadsheet found on the “Scoring Tool” tab. Figures 1-5 provide screen shots of the various tabs for illustration purposes only – a copy of the tool itself can be found on the SWAP website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/cwcs/>).

*The tool is intended to prioritize all types of actions (even those that are not similar; e.g. a planning activity vs. a habitat improvement project); however, it may be more useful when evaluating similar actions (e.g. one type of species survey vs. another species survey).*

*Scoring (completed in the ScoringTool tab):*

- Step 1: Describe an Activity in Column A.*
- Step 2: Assign a Resource Score by determining Taxa or Ecological System Priority value (see Figure 5). If more than one applies, choose the highest ranking (lowest #).*
- Step 3: Record the value derived from Step 2 in Column AO of the ScoringTool tab*
- Step 4: Examine the ABSOLUTE PRIORITY, NON-PRIORITY, WEIGHTED PRIORITY, and STANDARDS PRIORITY Columns in the ScoringTool tab; insert a "1" in all that apply. (See figures 1-4)*

*Interpreting the Results:*

- Step 1: Consider the overall Total Absolute Priority Score (Column H).*
- Step 2: Any action with a positive value in the Total Absolute Priority column should be treated as a high priority and justification should be developed if the activity will not be conducted or completed.*
- Step 3: Consider the Total Non-Priority Score (Column N).*
- Step 4: Any action with a positive value in the Total Non-Priority column should be treated as a very low priority and justification should be developed if the activity is to be conducted.*
- Step 5: Examine the Total Priority Score (AN) and the Combined Priority Score (AO).*
- Step 6: The Combined Priority Score is the Actions final priority score and should be compared to scores from other activities being evaluated.*
- Step 7: When making decisions, it may be useful to also compare just the Total Priority Scores to understand how the Resource Score embedded into the Combined Priority Score affected that score.*

## Classifying actions and activities

For the purposes of this prioritization tool, actions and activities that WDFW undertakes may be prioritized by classifying actions using the categories described below.

### Absolute Priority

If an action is linked to one or more absolute priority values, the action is assumed to be of highest priority and is required to be accomplished or justification provided for why it will not be.

- Statutory Requirement
- Legal Mandate (e.g. court order)
- Financial or Contract obligations (including match commitments for grants)
- Governor Priorities and Requests (e.g. Results Washington)
- Fish and Wildlife Commission Requests
- WDFW Director or Assistant Director Priorities and Requests (e.g. Conservation Initiative)

Figure 1 Illustration of the Absolute Priority Scoring Tool

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY						TOTAL ABSOLUTE SCORE
Statutory Requirement	Legal mandate (e.g. court order)	Financial, or Contract Obligations (including Match commitments )	Governor Priorities and Requests (Results WA)	FWC Priorities and Requests	Director or Assistant Director Priorities and Requests (e.g. Conservation Initiative)	

### Non-priority

Justification should be provided if a Non-priority action is implemented despite the Absolute-priority determination. In general, WDFW should not implement actions determined to be a Non-priority.

- Other entities will lead or are likely to conduct the actions with or without WDFW.
- The cost of the project makes the action infeasible, including consideration of short- and long-term resource commitments.
- The likelihood of success is so low that investing in the effort is not justifiable.
- The action will result in significant risk to WDFW authorities or funding streams.
- Action will result in higher priority conservation action not occurring.

Figure 2 Illustration of the Non-Priority Scoring Tool

NON-PRIORITY					TOTAL NON-PRIORITY SCORE
Other entities (USFWS, NOAA, Federal Land Managers, non-profits, land trusts, Partnerships, Citizen Science) will lead or are likely to perform the conservation actions with or without WDFW	The cost of the project makes the action infeasible, including consideration of short- and long-term resource commitments	The likelihood of success is so low that investing in the effort is not justifiable	Action will result in significant risk to WDFW authorities or funding streams	Action will result in higher priority conservation action not occurring	

**Weighted Priority.** These are criteria that are considered to be particularly important when determining an actions priority. (See Figure 3)

- Achieves conservation outcome that contributes to species recovery.
- Achieves conservation outcome that maintains or restores ecological integrity.
- External interests could impact WDFW's regulatory authorities or funding if WDFW does not engage in the action.
- Action is a state, regional, national or international priority that WDFW has committed to support (NABCI/AFWA/WAFWA priorities).
- Achieves conservation necessary to preclude the need for listing or support down-listing or de-listing action at the Federal level, or mitigates the impacts of a listing (e.g. CCAA, SHA).
- Achieves conservation necessary to preclude the need for listing or support down-listing or de-listing action at the state level.
- WDFW participation is essential to address an urgent conservation need (imminent threat) that will result in unacceptable harm or loss to the species or habitat.
- Action or project is likely to maintain or develop a funding source or mechanism for diversity species conservation.
- WDFW participation would foster partnerships or help maintain project and/or social/political support for WDFW.
- Action can be shown to have long-term values when evaluated in climate change projections.

Figure 3 Illustration of the Weighted Priority Scoring Tool

WEIGHTED PRIORITY (INSERT "1" IN EACH APPLICABLE CELL; IT WILL BE MULTIPLIED BY THE VALUE IN COLUMN Y)										TOTAL WEIGHTED PRIORITY SCORE
Achieves conservation outcome that contributes to species recovery	Achieves conservation outcome that maintains or restores ecological integrity	External interests could damage WDFW's regulatory authorities or funding if WDFW does not engage	State, regional, national or international priority that WDFW has committed to support (NABCI/AFWA/WAFWA priorities)	Achieves conservation necessary to preclude the need for Federal listing or likely to result in the species being listed (or downlisted) as threatened, or delisted; or mitigate the impacts of a listing (e.g. CCAA, SHA)	Achieves conservation necessary to preclude the need for State listing or likely to result in the species being listed (or downlisted) as sensitive, threatened, or delisted	WDFW participation is essential to address a pressing conservation need (imminent threat) that will result in unacceptable harm or loss to the species or habitat	Action or project likely to maintain or develop a long-term funding source or mechanism for diversity species conservation	Failure to participate would erode or prevent important partnerships or cause the collapse of a multi-partner or ongoing project and/or social/political support for WDFW	Action can be shown to have long-term values when evaluated in climate change projections	3
										0

## Standard Priority

Criteria that contribute to an action's priority but have not been weighted (see figure 4).

- Fills an immediate or near-term critical information need.
- Provides ecosystem, landscape level, or multiple SGCN species benefits.
- Action will preclude the need for Critical Habitat designation on WDFW lands Action addresses a need in a Federal recovery plan.
- Action addresses address a need in a species-specific State management plan
- Action addresses a need in the SWAP.
- Action maintains or develops a partnership or citizen science effort that will implement conservation actions and reduce future WDFW work load.
- Yields expanded conservation capacity and/or significant reduction in conservation work load
- Action is likely to significantly inform the public on important species conservation and other diversity issues.
- Facilitates special conservation agreements involving landowners (private or public).
- Contributes to conservation assessment and/or status review with a longer-term need
- Action will also meet other WDFW goals and objectives (e.g. recreation such as hunting, fishing, watchable wildlife; customer service; maintain workforce).

Figure 4 Illustration of the Standard Priority Scoring Tool

STANDARD PRIORITY - (ENTER "1" IN EACH APPLICABLE CELL; IT WILL BE MULTIPLIED BY THE VALUE IN COLUMN AM)										TOTAL STANDARD PRIORITY SCORE
Fills an immediate or near-term critical information need	Provides ecosystem, landscape level, or multiple SGCN species benefits	Action will preclude the need for Critical Habitat designation on WDFW lands (may not be needed due to HCP)	Action addresses a need in a Federal recovery plan	Action addresses address a need in a species-specific State management plan (e.g. recovery, 2-year action)	Action addresses a need in the SWAP	Action maintains or develops a partnership or citizen science effort that will implement conservation actions and reduce future WDFW work load	Action is likely to significantly inform the public on important species conservation and other diversity issues	Contributes to conservation assessment and/or status review with a longer-term need or use horizon	Action will also meet other WDFW goals and objectives (e.g. recreation such as hunting, fishing, watchable wildlife; customer service; maintain workforce)	1
										0

## Scoring Totals

All actions are evaluated against all Weighted and Standard criteria, which generates a combined priority score (figure 6). Each score may be further refined by including the Resource Score in the analysis. Resource Scores are determined by comparing the NatureServe State and Global Ranks for species or ecosystem (See figure 5).

Figure 5 Assigning Resource Scores

Resource Priority value relative to NatureServe Status Rank Category					
Taxa Priority Assignment = red digits (see TaxaRankValues tab for S and G values)					
↑	NatureServe Global Rank				
NatureServe State Rank	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5
S1	1	1	1	2	2
S2	x	2	2	3	3
S3		x	4	5	5
S4			x	6	6
S5 & SNA				x	7
If a taxon is a vagrant, limited occurrence, peripheral to Washington due to geographic/political boundaries, or otherwise irregular in contributing to WA biodiversity, it is Priority = 8					
Habitat (Ecol. System) Priority = red digits					
	Global Category				
State Category	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	1	1	2	2
2	x	2	2	3	3
3		x	4	5	5
4			x	6	6
5				x	7
1 = critically imperiled (at highest risk of extinction) 2 = imperiled 3 = vulnerable 4 = apparently secure 5 = secure					

Figure 6 Combined Priority Score

TOTAL STANDARD PRIORITY SCORE	TOTAL PRIORITY SCORE	RESOURCE SCORE	=	COMBINED PRIORITY SCORE
1				
Subtotal	Subtotal	Subtotal	=	TOTAL